

Seaview Stables
Adventures

The
Pony
With No
Name

TRACEY
CORDEROY



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For Alana, with much love . . . T.C.



Chapter 1

Blueberry Muffin was cross. Bryony could always tell. He was perched, rather stiffly, on the end of her bed, staring ahead at thin air.

‘Sorry, Berry,’ Bryony said. ‘When it stops raining you’ll feel better. Then we’ll go and explore together. We’ll *love* Brook Dale, you’ll see!’

She stroked her cat’s silvery fur but he flatly refused to purr, so she strolled across the bare floorboards to her window instead.

Bryony rubbed the misted-up glass and peered down the garden to what looked like plum trees. This must have been how Plum Cottage had got its name, she thought. Last night they’d arrived too



late to see anything much, but now she saw the garden looked rambling and wild.

‘Ahhh ...’ Bryony suddenly heard herself sigh. Wandering back to her bed, she sat down close to Berry. He wasn’t the only one feeling out of place ...

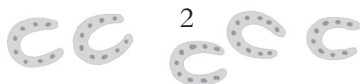
She gazed around her new bedroom crammed with unpacked boxes. It was small and the walls were thick and lopsided. It had someone else’s smell, someone else’s wallpaper. It looked nothing like her old bedroom she’d left behind.

‘It’ll be okay,’ said her grown-up voice inside, ‘... you only arrived last night. Things are *bound* to feel different. Give it time.’

With a faint *meow*, Berry rolled onto his back and presented his tummy to be tickled. Maybe he was coming round a bit.

‘Grandpa’s visiting later,’ Bryony said, stroking the cat’s warm, round tummy. ‘He might even bring you some fish if you’re lucky, eh?’

Bryony surprised herself now with a smile, which must have come from thinking of her grandfather. Albert Wallace had a warm smile too, and he was really kind. Grandpa, like Bryony,



loved to be busy, with new projects always on the go. Now Bryony would be able to see him much more than ever she could before. In fact, one of the reasons they'd moved to Brook Dale was to be closer to him. That, and to make a 'fresh start' in this run-down old cottage by the sea.

Bryony pulled across a packing box and started to rummage inside. An assortment of objects steadily littered her quilt as she delved deeper into its depths. A book on gemstones, a handful of pens, some hair ties and several odd socks. Then, finally, she fished out *just* the thing.

'There!' said Bryony, clutching the picture frame. She licked her finger and rubbed a smudge off the glass. 'Welcome to rainy Brook Dale, everyone!'

Bryony thought of her two best friends standing beside her in the photo. She wondered what they'd both be up to now. Becky – small, blonde and freckly, and tall, skinny Fran with black hair. And there in the middle was Bryony, her wild auburn hair forced into plaits and her sea-green eyes smiling. Bryony was at her happiest when surrounded by friends.



She poked around in the box again and pulled out a big red rosette. The same one she was wearing in the photo. *Park Lodge Stables – First Prize*, it said. She'd won it at her riding school's gymkhana last year. As she smoothed the crumpled ribbons flat, she recalled that special day . . .

Right at the start of the morning, everyone had drawn straws to decide which pony they'd ride. Poor Fran had ended up with Boris-the-Bold who wasn't very bold at all (unless you counted nibbling the judge's jumper!). Becky had had more luck on jet-black Midnight, coming second in the Barrel Race. But Peppermint, the pony that Bryony had drawn, had been the *real* star that day. A cool calm grey with flecks of silver, Peppermint reminded Bryony of a unicorn. And that day she had jumped so smoothly it had felt to Bryony like they were actually flying!

The next photo out of the box was one of the family, taken on holiday in France a few years ago. She and her twin brother, Josh, were in the centre. Josh, who was younger than Bryony by seven minutes, was slightly taller than her, and his scruffy hair was brown and much straighter. Beside Josh



was Mum, and beside Bryony (with the same curly hair and green eyes as she had) was . . .

‘*Dad.*’ Bryony whispered the word, which ended in a hushed deep sigh.

It had only been six months since he’d died and she missed him *so much*. And now moving house somehow made it feel even longer since they were all together as a family.

A tear escaped from Bryony’s eye before she could dab it away. She quickly hugged the photo close to her chest, like if Dad saw her crying it would make *him* sad too. Silly, she knew. But it was just how she felt. Dad had always said how proud he was of the way she smiled and got on with things. She mopped up the tear with the cuff of her sleeve. She *wouldn’t* let Dad down, whatever . . .

‘Right then!’ said her grown-up voice inside. ‘Just think of moving as an adventure. You really like adventures, you know you do!’

Bryony nodded. That was true. She’d never been scared of adventures. In fact, she’d always *loved* the feeling of butterflies in her tummy. That wonderful, tingly feeling she’d got the first time she ever sat on a pony. Or when she’d first trotted,



or cantered, or galloped, or attempted her very first jump!

She put both photos on her bedside table. These memories would always be with her, like Dad would – wherever she was. And now she was here, it was the summer holidays and time for her to get out and make even *more* memories . . .

*

A spring in her mattress gave a small twang as Bryony got off her bed. Berry opened one eye to show his annoyance.

‘Time for breakfast,’ Bryony said with a yawn. The cat’s eye shut again. ‘Okay,’ she shrugged. ‘See you later then.’

She opened the door and headed out, the floorboards creaking noisily. Those would need sorting. This cottage was falling to bits!

A long queue of packing boxes lined the landing wall. They looked almost bored, like they were waiting for a very late bus.

‘I’ll be back!’ Bryony told them, as if they could understand. Straight after breakfast, she promised herself, she’d start on the unpacking. *This* was



home now and the sooner she made it feel like that the better.

At the bottom of the steep, dark staircase, the warm smell of toast filled the air. ‘Just what I need,’ Bryony said. Mum always had a knack of knowing.

She closed her eyes to breathe in the smell when suddenly a torrent of eager footsteps sounded on the stairs behind.

‘Out the way!’ yelled Josh impatiently, jumping the last four steps. ‘Smells like things are looking up! *Toast time.*’

She saw the back of her twin brother’s head disappear through the kitchen doorway. ‘Hey – save some for *me!*’ called Bryony, hurrying after him.

The kitchen was already Bryony’s favourite room. She’d decided that last night. It felt familiar, comfy – worn in, like her favourite pair of old Converse! Its walls were rough and bumpy but its floor was shiny stone. Not shiny from polish or because it was new, but rather because it was ancient. Countless feet must have felt its cool touch as they’d left their stories. And now it was Bryony’s turn to add hers.



She smiled as she spotted the old rocking chair nestled in a deep alcove. It fitted so well, just like it belonged. Like it had been there for ever . . .

Suddenly, her thoughts returned to home. To the place where the chair had rocked before. To the busy city – full of noise and cars – where people bustled and lights in shop windows burned all day and night. To their thin white house, with its smooth slate roof and strawberry-red front door. Dad had changed it from black to surprise Mum one day when she'd gone shopping. And it really did as she'd almost walked right past it!

The kitchen in Plum Cottage, although still bare, was very snug and welcoming. When Bryony walked in, Mum was at the Aga in a stripy top and dungarees. Her light brown hair was in a loose wispy bun and round her wrist jangled several silver bangles. She looked arty and very pretty, Bryony thought.

'Hmm . . .' said Mum, peering into the Aga. 'Just figuring out how to light the thing!'

'It looks *ancient*,' frowned Josh.

'The colour's nice, though!' smiled Bryony. It was a deep, mysterious navy.



‘Yes!’ Mum nodded. ‘I was just thinking that too.’

It would be easier here, Bryony told herself, than back in the city without Dad. In fact, this funny old place was already starting to weave its magic. She saw her dad’s grin in the knots on the doors, in the curls of peeling wallpaper, in the plum trees waving, calling her to play. New adventures were out there waiting too, in the wood and the caves by the sea! Secrets were waiting for her to discover. New friends to make. She was ready . . .

‘If only it would stop raining!’ Bryony said to her mum. ‘I want to go and explore! But what if this place hasn’t got any *girls*? Just tons of toast-thieving *boys* like my brother?!’

With that, she staged a spectacular faint onto the kitchen table. Great practice, thought Bryony, for when she was an actress!

‘Right,’ said Mum, bringing over some toast. ‘Thank goodness for the toaster! No butter, though – sorry. I’ll go shopping later. But we do have jam and—’ Suddenly Mum stopped as there was a knock on the door and the twins jumped up and raced each other over shouting . . .

‘*Grandpa!*’

